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India

# The Stone of Reproach

TAMIL METHODIST CHURCH, MADRAS, INDIA

## Madras a Strategic Center

In 1872 Bishop William Taylor, the famous California evangelist, founded the Methodist Episcopal Church in Madras. Under his powerful preaching large numbers of Europeans and natives throughout India were converted.

Madras is the third largest city in India and has a population of 500,000. The only university in South India is here, while there are also several colleges for both men and women.

A Union Christian College for women has recently been established, twelve different denominations cooperating. Education in Madras has advanced perhaps further than in any other part of India. While Tamils furnish the bulk of the population, there are also thousands of Telugus, Kanarese, Malayalam, and Hindustanis.

## Satan's Seat

Idolatry flourishes in Madras. Mosques and temples abound. Hinduism of the most bigoted type is rampant. The heathen are constantly showing their aggressiveness.

## A Homeless Congregation



Sunday afternoons.

The Tamil work, however, has been greatly retarded because the Indian congregation, with a membership of three hundred, has not had a church structure that would be available on all days of the week and at convenient hours on Sunday.

After Bishop Taylor's revival the European converts built a commodious place of worship and have since granted the Indian congregation the use of the church building for worship on

### The Stone of Reproach

In 1906 the Jubilee of Indian Methodism was celebrated. Bishops and other eminent Methodists visited India and rejoiced over the wonderful things God had wrought amongst the Tamil people. At that time Bishop Fitzgerald, Bishop Thoburn, and Bishop Oldham laid the corner stone of the Tamil church. It was hoped that the building would be constructed without delay. Ten years have passed and the corner stone stands alone. One can hardly blame the heathen for saying, as they pass that lonely memorial, "They began to build, but were not able to finish." It has become in truth a stone of reproach.

### Trophies

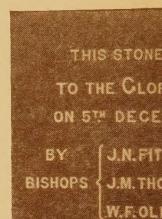
Many trophies of the Cross have been won among these Tamil people. Miss Grace Stephens, who has been a missionary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in Madras for forty years, has a room filled with idols and heathen symbols and adornments given up by converts when they renounced heathenism. The history of these men and women who have given up all for Christ in a way unknown in favored America, borders on the miraculous. Persecutions unto death have been endured and characters have been transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Ranguswami, convicted by the Spirit of God, surrendered his heart to the Lord and was baptized. For years, while attached to the Thatchaumurthi Maddam Temple, it was Ranguswami's special

business to go about the city as a mendicant for offerings of rice and money for the use of the priests. He always wore his yellow cloth, which is the badge of a Hindu religious mendicant, and had his arms and face smeared with paint marks. When the heathen people living in the city heard of Ranguswami's conversion, they took his clothes from him and stoned him. He stood firm, however, and witnessed a good confession.

"That man is a Christian," said Poonuswamy, an Indian preacher, pointing to a big black fellow working with a spade. The man wore merely a rag about his waist and was covered from head to foot with the water of the rice-field in which he was working. Approaching the man, I asked, "How do you know you are a Christian?" "By this," he said, lifting the cloth from his loins while I beheld great scars across his abdomen made by spades like the one he was using. "These men, my masters, cut me open like this the day I was baptized." "What did you do to these brutes in return?" I asked. "Sir, I prayed for them and I pray for them every day."

Ragunaidu, whose family was wealthy and who were of the race of the ancient



kings of Madura, was publicly baptized in Madras. His people were at once enraged. They tried to secure the custody of the young man by bribing him to run away and by offering him all sorts of worldly advancement if he would only revert to heathenism. After they had finally given up they yet longed for vengeance upon the missionaries.

Meeting Miss Grace Stephens in their part of the native section, she was asked to enter their large home. In a little windowless room in the innermost part of the building where a cocoanut lamp shed a few dim rays of light, the mother met her. Expressing delight, she asked her to be seated. She herself arose immediately and went to the door. Now she showed the tigerish hatred of the jungle as she screamed out in Telugu. "You stole my son. Now I will take your life. You will not reach your house before the cobra's venom kills you." The mother then upset a basket containing a large cobra.

Hissing its warning, the cobra raised its hooded head. Miss Stephens raised her hands in prayer. "O Saviour," she cried, "help me now." Gathering her skirts in

her hand, she leaped over the cobra and fled through the dark passage. Reaching the door, she called her coachman and made her escape. Ragunaidu preached for us many years and the day before his death said, "I am trusting in the Christ who saves me to the uttermost."

#### In the Zenanas of Madras

Although forbidden to cross the threshold of their house or to look upon the face of man other than their husbands and near relatives, numbers of these sadly disadvantaged wives and mothers in India are receiving the love of Christ into their hearts and are becoming His disciples. Beautiful testimonies fall from their lips. Children, too, sing the sweet songs taught them by devout Bible women. A little Indian girl said to her Hindu mother, as she saw her making her offerings to the household god, "You worship a god to whom you give everything and get nothing. I worship a God who freely gives me everything."

Autchama was the wife of the headman of the village. When she became a follower of Christ her daughter would spit in her face, her son would drag her around by her hair, her husband, furious and angry, would rain blows upon her body. She endured the bitter reproach and ridicule and now one sees in her the perfect work of Jesus. To-day she is one of the brightest jewels in the Redeemer's crown. The people in the neighborhood honor her and the son who once dragged her by the hair of her head is a Christian.

### The Time Is at Hand

Through the years the Indian brethren have been working on the project of building a church. Our Indian Christian people are very poor. They are denying themselves food. Many of them have only one meal a day, and yet out of their very little they are giving for this church. Already they have collected over \$3,500. They now look to their brothers and sisters of America to help, where the people can give without going hungry and where cathedrals and churches are counted by the hundreds in every large city.

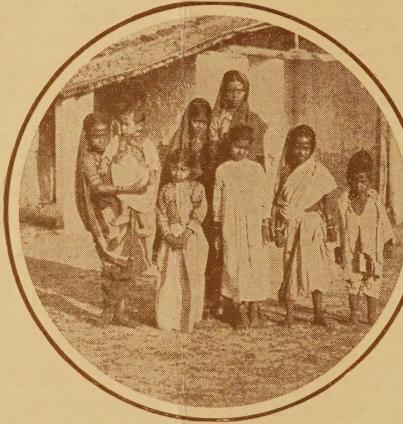
Can you not remember this needy field and help to build this one church in Madras? Five thousand dollars more will be required to build a church for the growing Tamil congregation at Madras, one of the greatest strategic centers of India for the American Methodists.

Giving by God's people is an act of worship. It is as acceptable and as necessary as praise or prayer. Our giving is a measure of our love to God. It measures our interest and our faith in God. The church at Madras is to be an evidence that God's people are trying to carry out His plans to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

### The Short and Easy Way

How is the money to be provided? Many hands make light work. There will be needed:

10 doors, each to cost \$50...	\$500
20 windows, each to cost \$25	500
400 seats, each to cost \$5.....	2,000
10 trusses, each to cost \$100.	1,000
100,000 bricks, to cost \$10 per thousand.....	1,000
Total.....	\$5,000



A family, a person, an Epworth League, or a Sunday School class could each take one of the doors. Individuals are asked to provide for seats at \$5 and others are invited to give \$10 for one thousand bricks. Ten of God's stewards will be required to furnish the ten trusses to support the roof at \$100 each.

Further information regarding work among the Tamil-speaking people of South India and the work that is being done for them by the Methodist Episcopal Church will be gladly furnished.

Correspondence and pledges should be directed to James M. Taylor, D.D., Secretary Department of Foreign Evangelism, Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York City.